

Hello, my name is Abigail O'Keefe.

I am writing to show my support for Proposed Bill No. HB-5496. Allowing for the use of safe pyrotechnics, such as smoke bombs, for photographic and videographic special effects would enrich the atmosphere of artistic and sporting events throughout the state. Allowing for the sale and use of these devices would bring a new element of expression and intrigue to events and digital content, therefore attracting more interest and potential business. When used correctly, these effects are safer than the average sparklers that are on sale all over Connecticut. The benefits far outweigh any potential concerns, as evidenced by cities all over the world where smoke bombs are legal.

I serve as Vice President for the Hartford Athletic supporters group The Bonanza. Since Hartford Athletic's inaugural season in 2019, The Bonanza has worked to create the best atmosphere in Connecticut sports. Specifically from the perspective of supporters group leadership, I believe that allowing for devices such as smoke bombs would greatly enhance the unique and wonderful culture we've built. Supporters groups around the country and world use these devices safely and spectacularly at soccer matches. It's a big part of soccer culture that has sadly been missing at Hartford Athletic matches. If we were granted the same opportunities as our peers in the United Soccer League through the passing of this bill, we would be able to attract more people to our state's great team with these effects. Our leadership takes everyone's safety extremely seriously. We would not be advocating for the use of smoke if we thought it would be unsafe. We intend to train a select group of people to handle these smoke devices with common sense and discretion. We work with Hartford Athletic staff to ensure that fans and supporters have the best match day experience possible, and everyone agrees that smoke would take things to the next level.

I sincerely hope you consider the hard work we have been doing and the testimony of my fellow supporters of Hartford Athletic and this bill. Passing Bill No. HB-5496 would bring some much needed color into the lives of Connecticut residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Abigail O'Keefe